

An American Liver Augury?

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I find it difficult to understand how such a clear-thinking reporter as *Chalmers Roberts* can regard the current hearings on Soviet and American economic growth, and particularly Allen Dulles' testimony, as constituting a bit of "refreshing soul-searching."

To me the Dulles testimony and the committee questioning seemed far, far away from genuine soul-searching. It appeared to me more like a revival of the Etruscan and Hittite practice of conducting liver auguries to decide questions of political and moral conduct.

The uncriticized assumptions linking economic liver science with American moral policy are these: First, that we are, and must be, engaged in a cold war and must prepare ourselves for a hot war in order to assure the victory of freedom and spiritual values over the system of "Godless atheism" (to use President Eisenhower's phrase) and economic materialism which is propagated by the Russians; and second, that in order to wage the cold war effectively and prepare effectively for the hot war, we must maintain a decisive lead in the race for economic growth with Russia.

The first assumption is similar to the assumption behind the medieval military crusades—to wit, the belief that the nations of the West could, and were obligated to, spread Christianity at the point of the sword. As everybody knows today, it wasn't Christianity that was spread in this fashion, but a travesty of Christianity.

And now we learn from Mr. Dulles' testimony that it is a travesty of spiritual values that we wish to spread by the economic and propaganda techniques of the cold war. The CIA director cites as proof of his contention that the Russians are a materialistic society their failure and lack of desire to produce as many au-

tomobiles as we do! The passage in his testimony which asserts this has to be read in its entirety to be believed:

"There is a materialistic society. They assign a low priority to those endeavors which would lead to a fuller life for their people. The attitude they take toward automobiles is a good illustration of this policy. Mr. Khrushchev was undoubtedly impressed by the view he gained of our over-all economic strength. He was by no means persuaded that he should emulate us in the automotive field. In an address at Vladivostok about a month ago, he said that it was 'not at all our aim to compete with the Americans in the producing of a large number of cars.'"

Mr. Dulles' Freudian slip about the nature of Russian materialism provides a clear indication that the cold war is not a struggle of spiritual values vs. materialism, but rather a struggle between two rival versions of materialism. Only we call our gadget-making version of materialism a religious spiritualism.

The second assumption, that we have to win the economic race with Russia in order not to lose out ultimately in the struggle for military survival, expresses the materialistic interpretation of history in its crudest and most senseless form.

If any wars are fought they will be either brush-fire wars or nuclear wars. Neither type of war will be decided by the indices of over-all industrial production. And yet Mr. Dulles solemnly warned us in his testimony that unless we increase our industrial production rate, the gap between the Russian and American economies by 1970 "will be dangerously narrowed." And he explained in answer to Senator Javits' question that he meant by this that our "national security" would be endangered.

In addition to its supposed

bearing on future war, the gospel of increased economic production is preached as a way of winning the cold war by enabling us to extend more aid to undeveloped countries and thus keeping them away from communism. Although Mr. Dulles did not go into this aspect in his testimony, other leading personalities, notably Governor Rockefeller, have frequently dwelt on it.

When reason dawns, it becomes obvious that while we have a moral duty to help with-in our means others who are less fortunate than we, yet we falsify our duties to ourselves and our fellow men when we use aid as a means of persuading people to become "rice Christians." Whatever aid we are willing to give should be given without any ideological strings attached.

Actually we can help the undeveloped sections of the world not so much by economic charity, but by the slow contagion of our economic example, in so far as these countries are willing to follow that example. If any of these countries want to follow the example of Russia, common sense as well as morality tells us that we should let them. Whether one undeveloped country or another adopts the Russian technique of industrialization does not affect our military survival in a nuclear age.

As for combating the errors of communism which we believe to be destructive of civilized values, that can properly be done only by diffusing through the example of our own lives a devotion to higher and more spiritual truths. When we authorize the state to combat the errors of communism by government propaganda and economic warfare tactics, we merely serve to propagate these same errors in the guise of combating them.

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